



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE NEW YORK ART CLUB EXHIBITION.

THE New York Art Club, an organization that has been for some time in existence, held its first annual exhibition this season in the Art Gallery on Madison Square. The club is composed almost exclusively of well-known artists, and since its rules permit members to send to its exhibitions any works, whether before exhibited or not, which they deem to be satisfactory indices of their powers, there could be no excuse for a bad show. On that account the fact that the show was a very good one astonished nobody, especially as outsiders were excluded and the abilities of the Club were well known beforehand. When Messrs. Shirlaw, Eaton, Millet, La Farge, Inness, Eastman Johnson, and others of equal standing have matters all their own way—have not to contend with hanging committees, on the one hand, or a crowd of ridiculous aspirants on the other hand, they deserve no thanks for getting up a pretty good exhibition. Yet the exhibition was only pretty good. No one of the painters represented distinguished himself. Many fell below their average. No one, in fact, seemed to take especial interest in the thing.

Among the pictures most deserving of mention, F. D. Millet's little study of sea and shore was noteworthy. This was rather a study than a picture, although the arrangement of tones was evidently composed, not copied exactly from nature. For all that, it was in the matter of tones that the picture was most natural. The lines of the jutting promontory and detached rocks in the middle distance, the sweep of the beach in the foreground, and the curves of the breakers were, doubtless, conscientiously drawn and not wilfully changed in the least, but they were not delicately true. The artist was satisfied with giving a careless report of them. The blue of the sky and that of the water, the brownish pink of the strand, the gray of the rocks, and the fawn color and green of the live and dead patches of grass that covered them were, on the contrary, most carefully reproduced in their exact relations to one another. Even the pinkish light in the sky near the horizon and the apparent reflection in the wet sand—the most open attempt at composition in the thing—was, very likely, suggested by some transient natural effect. The little boat dancing between the shore and the rocks was as exactly right in tone as it would be in a mirror. In Paris, such painting might not be worthy of remark, but in this city it would be wrong not to direct attention to it. Mr. Millet is one of our young men who are really young. He has a future. If he remains as conscientious, as painstaking, as delicate as he now is, there is no telling to what heights he may attain.

Mr. Reinhart's coast scene, equally French, was yet very different. Mr. Reinhart had reached a leading position as a magazine and newspaper illustrator some years ago. Not content with the very good living and the respectable figure he was making, he threw up his engagements and went abroad to study. For a year or more it has seemed as though this was not a sensible move on his part, but it appears that he has finally awakened to the realities of his position, and has devoted himself to earnest work. His contribution gives evidence of a strong and growing talent. Unlike Mr. Millet's work, it shows no appreciation of color; but then we remember that Mr. Reinhart colored very well before he went away. He is now evidently studying other matters, form, values, handling. In these he is making progress; and, since the color gift is born with a man, he is not likely to lose it.

Mr. J. Francis Murphy exhibited "The Bend of a Stream." A little trout brook runs at an angle into the foreground from a point where it is hidden to the eye by the recurving of its course. Near that point stands a group of tall, dark-foliaged trees. Behind them, at a distance from the opposite shore of the brook, is a range of low hills. Above these is a well-conceived sky. With more of nature and more of art this would be a picture to live. The necessary inborn talent is there. Mr. Murphy has certainly made a mistake in exacting a livelihood from his brush, while he is yet a student. He should retire for a while from public view and come forth again when buyers have forgotten that they ever obtained his work for twenty or thirty dollars a canvas.

Of figure-paintings the exhibition had less than a due share. With the exception of Mr. Ward's negroes in a tobacco field, and some studies of heads by Shir-

law, Chase, and Eaton; and the La Farge pictures—early studies, "pot boilers," unfinished and abandoned work, raked up from dingy corners of his studio, yet shaming many more pretentious efforts in the exhibition—there was not much in this line worthy of a second glance. Eastman Johnson's little girl before a red-hot stove served to show how very unlike—we were about to say how inferior—is the handling of even the best artists of the old school to that of even the ordinary artist of the new. Benoni Irwin's portrait of an Irish laborer just missed being good. Mr. Beckwith's masked beauty had a pedagogueish look about her. Mr. Sartain's paintings were such as might have been done in the presence of a "composition class" of young ladies.

To sum up, the Art Club should try hard to do better the next time.

## FRENCH PAINTINGS IN NEW YORK.

A NEW YORK newspaper critic thinks that the taste which has been acquired by our picture-buyers for works of the class embraced in the recent Runkle sale will prove to be only transitory. He recalls the vogue that paintings of the Düsseldorf school once had with us, and intimates that the great French romantic school will in a few years be as completely forgotten. Critics who prophesy thus take desperate chances. They would write themselves down ignoramuses if they should maintain that the Düsseldorf professors were as good painters as the great Frenchmen. There are as yet no signs of any better artists arising. They must reckon, therefore, on a debasement of the public taste or a retrograde movement in artistic culture when they say that in a decade of years Corot and Millet and Rousseau will be little thought of. Of course, art has not come to a stand-still with the death of these men. New schools are forming; greater works than theirs, in some respects, will be produced. But it should not be forgotten that to the generation that was at work when we were born was intrusted the task of setting the world to rights again after the upturning of the Revolution, and that they did it pretty well. They were bigger men on the whole than we are likely to be—artists and critics and all.

Those, too, who think that contemporary French art is declining should see some of the new pictures at the dealers'. At Knoedler's, François Flameng's "Moonrise" is an excellent example of what one branch of the new French landscape school is striving for—i.e., the expression of a feeling for nature which Millet would not disown, though it is distinct from his, and also of fresh observations in some respects more fine and accurate than those of the great school which has now become historical—the school of Rousseau, Dupré, Diaz, and the rest of the Barbizon men. Flameng's picture shows the gently rising slope of stubble on which several figures of harvesters—in the middle distance—are binding and throwing down the sheaves to be set into stooks. The full harvest moon is rising a little to the right of the centre of the picture, and, in the top left-hand corner, Venus is shining brightly. The sky is full of light mists still tinged with rose from the sunken sun. At the left of the picture is a fallow field and beyond it some cottages with lights gleaming in the windows and thin pale columns of smoke rising from the chimneys. In management of tones this painting excels most of Millet's work, and the sentiment, though not so strong, is as true and wholesome. At Schaus's, Julien Dupré's splendid picture of a peasant woman conducting an unruly cow to pasture is still on exhibition. In it the landscape, painted entirely without sentiment, is nevertheless a triumph of verifiable reporting of facts, and the same may be said of the figure and the animal. If compared with the little Rousseau at Schaus's, Flameng's work at Knoedler's would seem to lack drawing, and the younger Dupré's to be lacking in brio. The new men are not yet great: they have yet to carve out a lasting fame for themselves, but he would be a rash prophet who should say that they never will.

Of figure painters not universally known here, there are two good examples of Henner among the late arrivals. The one at Schaus's is the principal. The other is at Knoedler's. Both are variations on his usual theme—a beautiful female figure surrounded by masses of dark green foliage through which breaks a blue sky to give warmth to the flesh. At Schaus's also

is a splendidly painted figure of a young girl in a loose red velvet robe by Jacquet. It would not be easy to find a work of the sort by any of the Frenchmen of the last generation which would make this look otherwise than respectable. The big canvas by Delort at Avery's, too, can hardly be said to show a decadence in French art. This, it will be remembered, was illustrated from the artist's sketch in our columns last spring, it having been exhibited at the Salon. It represents a notable incident of the campaign of 1794 when the Dutch fleet, frozen tight in the Texel, was captured by the cavalry of the Republic.

Pictures, new to this city, by Gérôme, Cabanel and Bougereau, now at the same galleries, serve to give point to these considerations, for they are not as good as the pictures before mentioned. If Courbet, Dupré, Rousseau hold their own, it is because they always will. They are men for all time. But some of the new men will ultimately take their places beside them.

SUCH of our readers as may visit Europe this summer are reminded that we have arranged with Mr. Davis, the well-known expert (of 147 New Bond Street, London), to give them, for a modest fee, a professional opinion as to the genuineness of any important work of art that they may think of buying.

## My Note Book.



THE result of the movement of the artists and the picture dealers to have foreign works of art imported into this country free of duty was most unexpected. Instead of granting the prayer of the petitioners, Congress, with unexplained perverseness, deliberately increased the ad valorem duty on paintings in oil or water-colors and professional statuary from ten to thirty per cent, and on decorated pottery and porcelain from fifty to sixty per cent. Flat decorated plaques, moreover, which under the old arrangement passed as pictures subject to the ten per cent duty, are now included in the general category of pottery.

UNSATISFACTORY as is this arrangement, I believe that so far as the interests of most of our younger artists are concerned it is infinitely preferable to the Perry Belmont free-trade-in-art bill as it was submitted to them and received their signatures in approval. These gentlemen seem to have followed, like a flock of sheep, the lead of their more famous and prosperous brethren. With a degree of self-denial as magnanimous as it was unanimous, they implored Congress to be so good as to deprive them of their bread and butter. They may thank their stars that Congress did not take them at their word. It is undoubtedly desirable to have free trade in first-class works of art, but it is not desirable to give free entry to the sweepings of the Parisian "Beaux Arts" and "ateliers des dames" with which this country would be flooded by American dealers as soon as the import duty should be removed.

INFERIOR pictures, necessarily, are produced by young painters. They are the apprentice work of embryo artists, and their market value is proportionately low. But inferior as they are, they give the young painter his subsistence while he is fitting himself for better things. Let in, free of duty, however, the higher class of student work of, say, Paris or Munich, and the art student in America would seek in vain for a market for his "pot-boilers." He would find it very difficult to sell a fifty dollar or a hundred dollar picture with such competition. We all know that "pot-boilers" must be produced. They are a necessary evil—very necessary indeed to the producers. But we in America have no interest in increasing the evil by inviting the augmentation of the stock from abroad!

It is urged, I believe, that the great aim of the "free art" movement is to foster American art by the importation, without legislative hindrance, of the best foreign work which shall serve at once as models for our painters and as educators of the public. To this